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Dean at university in Beirut is kidnapped

By Donald Neff
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Gunmen shot out the tires and windshield of the limousine transporting the dean of agriculture at the American University of Beirut and kidnapped him minutes after he returned to that embattled city, a university spokesman announced yesterday.

Thomas Sutherland, 53, an American veterinarian from Fort Collins, Colo., who had been at the university for the past two years, had just returned from a three-week science and agricultural conference in the United States Sunday evening when his car was stopped a short distance from Beirut's airport by five or six gunmen.

Mr. Sutherland was pulled from the car and thrown in the kidnappers' vehicle, which sped away, according to wire service reports. Eyewitnesses said he was apparently uninjured.

In Washington, the State Department confirmed Mr. Sutherland's abduction but apparently had few other details. Officials were reported having difficulty locating his wife, Jean, also a teacher at AUB, who had remained in the United States.

The abduction was the eighth of an American in Beirut in the past 15 months, and seven of the victims remain missing. In addition, four Frenchmen and a Briton are also being held hostage, all presumably by the shadowy Islamic Jihad terrorist organization.

In another development, a French cease-fire observer was shot in the head and killed yesterday in the Shouf mountains overlooking Beirut, said a spokesman for the French force that oversees cease-fires between Druze gunmen and the Lebanese army.

The spokesman said Capt. Jean-Pierre Feyrignac was the sixth French observer

killed since the unit came to Lebanon last summer but declined to give details of his death. Christian Voice of Lebanon radio said he was shot by a sniper.

The rash of kidnappings of Westerners was seen as part of Islamic Jihad's avowed aim of ridding Lebanon of all Westerners, an effort in which it has been largely successful. Few Westerners are still in Beirut.

Additionally, telephone calls by persons representing themselves as members of Islamic Jihad have said the kidnap victims were being held to effect an exchange for the release of 17 Moslem Shi'ites imprisoned in Kuwait for the 1983 bombings of the French and American embassies there.

Islamic Jihad — the name means "holy war" — recently sent photographs of some of the kidnap victims and threatened a "horrible disaster" if the Kuwaiti prisoners were not released. Kuwait, with U.S. concurrence, has refused to deal with the abductors.

No group has yet taken responsibility for Mr. Sutherland's abduction.

Mr. Sutherland, the third American official of the school to be kidnapped since November, was one of the few Americans who had chosen to remain in the increasing anarchy of west Beirut.

David Jacobsen, 54, director of AUB's American University Hospital, was kidnapped by suspected Shi'ite Moslem extremists May 28 in west Beirut, and AUB librarian Peter Kilburn, 60, disappeared last Dec. 3.

The other missing Americans are U.S. Embassy official William Buckley, 56; Presbyterian minister Benjamin Weir, 60; Catholic missionary Martin Lawrence Jenco, 50; and Associated Press bureau chief Terry A. Anderson, 37.

There were also fresh Palestinian attacks on Shi'ite Moslem Amal militia and army positions in Beirut. Police said

the attacks were aimed at forcing Amal to end its bloody, three-week siege of the two Palestinian refugee camps south of Beirut, where early morning battles killed two people and wounded eight, according to police, bringing total casualties since the fighting broke out May 19 to 536 dead and 2,268 wounded.

Meanwhile, in southern Lebanon, Israel's proxy militia continued to hold 21 Finnish U.N. peace-keeping soldiers incommunicado yesterday and renewed a vow to keep them captive until Shi'ite Moslem gunmen release 11 comrades.

"No one will meet with them until every one of our men are freed," said commanding Gen. Antoine Lahd of the South Lebanon Army.

Negotiations spanned three conti-

nents in an effort to gain the release of the Finnish members of the U.N. Interim Force in Lebanon, abducted Friday by the SLA in southern Lebanon.

Israeli officials said the Finns disarmed the SLA members and abandoned them, leaving them to be captured by the Amal. The SLA has charged that Finnish members of the U.N. peace-keeping force arrested 11 SLA men Friday and then turned them over to Amal. In retaliation, the SLA took captive 25 Finnish soldiers returning from leave in Israel.

Israel, which has come under international pressure to secure the release of the Finns, has argued it has only limited influence with the SLA but has sent army officials to Qantara and Marjayoun. Israel, which is completing its military withdrawal from southern Lebanon, has said it wants the SLA — a predominantly Christian Lebanese militia — to take over security operations in the areas it is vacating. But the Shi'ite Moslem Amal militia, which has fought to expel the Israelis from Lebanon, wants to dismantle the SLA.

U.N. spokesman Timur Goksel said UNIFIL was investigating the incident but denied charges Sunday by Israeli Defense Minister Yitzhak Rabin that the Finns provoked the kidnapping by helping Amal capture the SLA soldiers. Finnish Maj. Gen. Pertti Jokinen said the 11 SLA militiamen were deserters who had sought help from the Finnish soldiers.

Amal leader Nabih Berri said his terms for the release of the 11 militiamen include freedom for hundreds of Shi'ite prisoners that Israel transferred from southern Lebanon to a military prison in northern Israel. Mr. Berri also demanded the SLA pull out of the key Lebanese town of Jezzine but Mr. Rabin rejected Mr. Berri's conditions.

This article is based in part on wire service reports.